

## Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 184126

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC, PFOR, RO

SUBJECT: MIRCEA DEFECTIONS

REF: STATE 180890

1. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARMITAGE DISCUSSED MIRCEA DEFECTIONS AT SOME LENGTH WITH AMBASSADOR NICOLAE AT POLISH NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION JULY 22. ARMITAGE CONVEYED TWO MAIN POINTS: A) IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE US TO CONSIDER FORCEABLE RETURN OF THE MIRCEA SAILORS. OUR LAWS PROHIBIT THIS, AND THE CONGRESS WOULD NOT TOLERATE IT. ARMITAGE ASKED AMBASSADOR NICOLAE TO DO ALL HE COULD TO ENSURE THAT THE GOR UNDERSTANDS THIS, AND THAT THERE BE NO MISAPPREHENSION IN BUCHAREST THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, INS, OR ANY OTHER AGENCY OF THE USG HAS ANY DISCRETION IN THIS MATTER. B) ARMITAGE ALSO STRESSED TO NICOLAE THAT WE CONSIDER IT APPROPRIATE AND IMPORTANT  
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FOR ALL PARTIES CONCERNED THAT THERE BE AN OPPORTUNITY

FOR CONSULAR OFFICERS TO COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH CITIZENS OF THE COUNTRY WHICH THEY REPRESENT, AND THAT WHILE WE CANNOT FORCE SUCH A MEETING ON PERSONS WHO DO NOT WISH IT WE DO ALL WE CAN TO PERSUADE THEM TO AGREE TO SUCH MEETINGS. ARMITAGE SAID WE WERE STILL TRYING

TO ARRANGE A MEETING WITH VASIU. (A THIRD ATTEMPT IS BEING MADE TO PERSUADE VASIU TO AGREE TO A MEETING. HE HAS DECLINED TWICE.)

2. NICOLAE STRESSED THE DIFFICULTY OF THESE CASES, OCCASIONED BY FACT THAT THE MEN ARE MILITARY. HE MENTIONED THE CURRENT CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST IN RAUTA'S WIFE AND CHILD AND GOR EXPLANATIONS OF WHY THE GOR COULD NOT ALLOW THEM TO EMIGRATE. NOW THERE WOULD BE NOT ONE BUT SEVERAL SUCH CASES IN WHICH THE GOR COULD NOT ACT, AND NICOLAE FEARED THIS COULD AFFECT OUR RELATIONS. ARMITAGE SAID WE UNDERSTAND GOR SENSITIVITIES IN THE RAUTA CASE BUT GIVEN OUR TRADITIONS COULD NOT ACCEPT THE CONCEPT OF PUNISHING FAMILY MEMBERS FOR ACTS FOR WHICH THEY WERE NOT RESPONSIBLE. ARMITAGE TOLD NICOLAE THAT IF EMIGRATION PROBLEMS AROSE IN THE FUTURE WITH FAMILY MEMBERS OF THE MIRCEA SAILORS, WE WOULD HAVE TO COPE WITH THEM, BUT WE COULD NOT FORCE THE MEN TO RETURN.

3. LATER SAME DAY DEPARTMENT OFFICER CALLED ROMANIAN EMBASSY DCM IONITA AND RELAYED SAME POSITION AS ABOVE. IONITA WAS ALSO TOLD THAT WE WOULD ATTEMPT ONCE AGAIN TO PERSUADE VASIU OF USEFULNESS OF A MEETING.

4. DEPARTMENT OFFICER ALSO TOLD IONITA OF DEPARTMENT'S WILLINGNESS TO RELAY TO VASIU AND/OR UNGUREANU GOR OFFER OF AMNESTY, IF THIS WAS INDEED THE POSITION OF THE GOR AND IF THE ROMANIAN EMBASSY THOUGHT THIS MIGHT BE USEFUL. IONITA DECLINED TO SEND ANY MESSAGE TO EITHER UNGUREANU OR VASIU, SAYING IMPORTANT THING FROM GOR STANDPOINT IS AND HAS BEEN RETURN OF THE TWO SAILORS.

5. DURING IONITA'S DISCUSSION WITH ANDREWS JULY 21,  
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DURING WHICH HE RESTATED GOR WISH FOR RETURN OF BOTH SAILORS (REFTEL), IONITA ALSO CHARGED THAT AN AMERICAN CITIZEN NAMED PUICAN, WHO HAD BEEN SELECTED BY BALTIMORE OPSAIL COMMITTEE TO ESCORT MIRCEA SAILORS ON SIGHT-SEEING TRIPS TO WASHINGTON AND ANNAPOLIS, HAD SOUGHT TO INDUCE THE DEFECTION OF SOME SEAMEN. PUICAN WAS ACCUSED OF HAVING MADE AN "IMPROPER GIFT" TO ONE SAILOR NAMED POPA. IONYTA ALSO SAID PUICAN HAD

FOLLOWED THE MIRCEA TO PHILADELPHIA AND HAD SOUGHT ACCESS TO THE CREW IN THAT CITY, PRESUMABLY FOR NEFARIOUS REASONS. IONITA REQUESTED THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE TO "SEE TO IT" THAT PUICAN CEASED TO SEEK ACCESS TO MEMBERS OF THE MIRCEA CREW.

6. DEPARTMENT OFFICER (DUNLOP) LOCATED MR. AND MRS. PUICAN AND SPOKE TO THEM JULY 23 BY TELEPHONE. THEY CATEGORICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY DENIED HAVING EXCHANGED "ONE WORD OF POLITICS" WITH ANY OF THE MIRCEA CREW. THEY SEEMED GENUINELY PUZZLED AND DISTRESSED, EXPRESSING SORROW THAT THEIR EFFORTS TO BE FRIENDLY HAD BEEN MIS-INTERPRETED. REGARDING THE GIFT TO POPA, PUICAN SAID POPA HAD SUFFICIENT US MONEY (\$23.) TO BUY A TAPE DECK BUT NOT ENOUGH TO BUY THE MICROPHONE (\$7.00) AND PUICAN HAD PURCHASED THE MICROPHONE FOR HIM. RE VISIT TO MIRCEA IN PHILADELPHIA, MRS. PUICAN'S ROMANIAN-BORN MOTHER LIVES IN PHILADELPHIA AND THEY HAD DRIVEN HER TO THE DOCKS IN ORDER TO SEE "THAT BEAUTIFUL SHIP." PUICAN HAD SPOKEN TO OFFICER OF THE DECK BUT WHEN HE LEARNED SHIP WAS NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, HAD NOT SOUGHT FURTHER CONTACT.

7. DEPARTMENT OFFICER TOLD IONITA THAT IT APPEARED THAT A MOST REGRETTABLE MISUNDERSTANDING SEEMS TO HAVE OCCURRED REGARDING THE PUICANS, WHOSE ASTONISHMENT AT THE ALLEGATIONS SEEMED TO HIM COMPLETELY SINCERE. IONITA SAID HE WOULD CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THE MIRCEA CREWMEMBERS WHO HAD REPORTED PUICAN'S MISCONDUCT, RATHER THAN PUICAN'S DEFENSE OF IT.

8. AS EMBASSY IS AWARE, ADMIRAL SANDU HAD BEEN SCHEDULED TO VISIT WASHINGTON JULY 23 WHERE A CALL ON CHIEF OF CONFIDENTIAL

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NAVAL OPERATIONS ADMIRAL HOLLOWAY AND A LUNCHEON IN HIS HONOR HOSTED BY THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY MIDDENDORF HAD BEEN SCHEDULED. SANDU HAS CANCELLED HIS WASHINGTON VISIT, INFORMING THE NAVY JULY 22. ROMANIAN EMBASSY HAS INFORMED DEPARTMENT THAT SANDU CANCELLED WASHINGTON VISIT BECAUSE OF USG FAILURE TO RETURN THE FIRST TWO MIRCEA DEFECTORS.

9. MORNING OF JULY 23 ADMIRAL SANDU CALLED ON COMMANDER FOURTH NAVAL DISTRICT IN PHILADELPHIA TO REPORT THE ABSENCE FROM DUTY OF SENIOR LT. VLADIMIR MOISEC, "SEEN LEAVING THE SHIP AT 4:00 A.M. IN THE COMPANY OF A WOMAN." MOISEC HAS APPLIED FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM AT INS DISTRICT OFFICE IN PHILADELPHIA. ROMANIAN EMBASSY OFFICIAL (CONSUL GASPAR) AND OFFICERS OF THE

SHIP APPEARED AT THE INS OFFICE, REQUESTING IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO MOISEC. ROMANIAN EMBASSY HAS ALSO REQUESTED FROM DEPARTMENT IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO MOISEC, STATING AS GROUNDS FOR THE URGENCY THAT HE HAD OPERATIONAL INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR THE SAFE OPERATION OF THE VESSEL. INS REQUESTED DEPARTMENT'S OPINION WHETHER A MEETING ON

THOSE GROUNDS COULD BE HELD IMMEDIATELY.

10. DEPARTMENT RELAYED STANDARD POSITION REGARDING CONFRONTATIONS IN THESE CASES TO INS BUT ALSO STATED THAT DEPARTMENT WOULD URGE IN STRONGEST TERMS THAT MOISEC SHOULD DIVULGE TO MIRCEA OFFICERS ANY OPERATIONAL INFORMATION HE MIGHT HAVE. IF MOISEC WAS NOT WILLING AT THIS POINT TO TALK ABOUT RETURN TO THE SHIP, BUT WAS WILLING TO DISCUSS OPERATIONAL MATTERS, DEPARTMENT THOUGHT WE COULD REQUIRE ROMANIAN OFFICIALS TO CONFINED THEIR DISCUSSION TO OPERATIONAL MATTERS, AT LEAST DURING THIS MEETING.

11. INS HAS REPORTED THAT MOISEC INITIALLY REFUSED TO MEET WITH GASPAR AND THE SHIP OFFICERS BUT AGREED TO DO SO ON CONDITION THAT ONLY OPERATIONAL MATTERS WERE TO BE DISCUSSED. HE ALSO ASKED "IS THIS THE ONLY TIME I WILL HAVE TO DO THIS OR WILL THEY KEEP COMING BACK?" AND WAS TOLD ANY FURTHER MEETINGS WOULD BE CONFIDENTIAL

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ENTIRELY UP TO HIM. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE ENCOUNTER WERE EXPLAINED TO THE ROMANIANS AND THEY RELUCTANTLY AGREED TO TALK ONLY OF OPERATIONAL MATTERS. MEETING WAS HELD, DURING WHICH CONVERSATION SHIFTED TOWARD RETURN, AT WHICH POINT INS OFFICIAL TERMINATED IT. INS REPORTS MIRCEA OFFICERS SEEMED SATISFIED WITH THE "OPERATIONAL" INFORMATION THEY OBTAINED FROM MOISEC, I.E., THAT HE HAD NO KEYS OR EQUIPMENT ESSENTIAL FOR THE OPERATION OF THE SHIP.

12. ROMANIAN EMBASSY DCM IONITA IN SUBSEQUENT TELEPHONE CALL TO DEPARTMENT FORMALLY REQUESTED MOISEC'S RETURN. HE WAS TOLD THAT MOISEC COULD NOT BE FORCED TO RETURN TO THE SHIP.

13. MIRCEA HAD BEEN SCHEDULED TO SAIL FROM PHILADELPHIA AM JULY 24. HER DEPARTURE WAS MOVED UP TO 1:00 PM JULY 23 BEFORE MOISEC DEFECTED. LAST INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO DEPARTMENT INDICATES SHE MAY SAIL LATE PM JULY 23. ROBINSON

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